

What is claimed is:

--1. A method for processing a transaction, the method comprising:

automatically requesting an automated clearing house

5 transfer from a source account to a destination account via an automated clearing house network;

receiving the automated clearing house transfer;

adjusting destination account data associated with the destination account by increasing a balance of the destination

10 account by an amount of the transfer;

receiving transaction data from a merchant indicating an attempted transaction, the transaction data including a transaction amount and data identifying the destination account;

15 processing the attempted transaction with a credit card interchange rate; and

transmitting data to the merchant indicating one of authorization of the attempted transaction and denial of the attempted transaction.

20 --2. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein

automatically requesting the automated clearing house transfer includes

automatically requesting the automated clearing house transfer at a predetermined time for a predetermined amount of money.

5 --3. The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein the predetermined time is on a recurring basis.

 --4. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein automatically requesting the automated clearing house transfer includes

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automatically requesting the automated clearing house transfer on a transactional basis or on request by one of an associated account holder and an associated financial institution.

15 --5. The method as set forth in claim 3, wherein the recurring basis occurs one of daily, weekly, monthly and yearly.

20 --6. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the source account is one of a checking account, a savings account and a money market account.

--7. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein
the destination account is one of a checking account, a
savings account and a money market account.

5 --8. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein
the source account and the destination account are managed
by the same financial institution.

10 --9. The method as set forth in claim 6, wherein
the financial institution is one of a bank and a credit
card company.

15 --10. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein
receiving the transaction data from the merchant includes
receiving the data from the merchant via a proprietary
credit network, the proprietary credit network being associated
with one of VISA®, MasterCard®, Plus, Novus, Diner's Club® and
American Express®.

20 --11. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein
processing the attempted transaction with the credit card
interchange rate includes

accessing the balance of the destination account to
determine whether the balance is greater than or equal to the
transaction amount,

if it is determined that the balance is greater than or
5 equal to the transaction amount authorizing the attempted
transaction, and

if it is determined that the balance is not greater than or
equal to the transaction amount, denying the attempted
transaction.

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--12. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein
processing the attempted transaction with the credit card
interchange rate includes

accessing the balance of the destination account to
15 determine whether the balance is greater than or equal to the
transaction amount,

if it is determined that the balance is greater than or
equal to the transaction amount authorizing the attempted
transaction,

20 and if it is determined that the balance is not greater
than or equal to the transaction amount, one of reprocessing the
attempted transaction and accessing a line of credit associated
with at least one of the source account and the destination

account for funding the attempted transaction or at least a portion of the attempted transaction.

--13. The method as set forth in claim 12, wherein

5 an account holder associated with the source account and the destination account is presented with an option of reprocessing the attempted transaction or accessing the line of credit associated with the at least one of the source account and the destination account.

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--14. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein

the credit card interchange rate is a percentage of the transaction amount.

15 --15. The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:

providing interest at one of a fixed interest rate and a variable interest rate on at least a portion of the balance of the destination account, the interest accruing after expiration
20 of a predetermined period of time.

--16. The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:

providing a reward to an account holder associated with the source account and the destination account, if the attempted transaction was authorized.

5 --17. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein
providing the reward includes
assigning at least one reward unit to another account
associated with the destination account, the at least one reward
unit being determined according to the transaction amount of the
10 attempted transaction.

15 --18. The method as set forth in claim 17, wherein
the at least one reward unit includes one of at least one
point and at least one mile.

20 --19. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein
the reward includes one of a discount on the transaction
amount of the attempted transaction, a gift certificate, a
coupon, a good and a service.

20 --20. A method for processing a transaction, the method
comprising:

receiving an automated clearing house transfer from a
source account via an automated clearing house network;

adjusting destination account data associated with a
destination account by increasing a balance of the destination
5 account by an amount of the transfer;

receiving transaction data from a merchant indicating an
attempted transaction, the transaction data including a
transaction amount and data identifying the destination account;

processing the attempted transaction with a credit card
10 interchange rate; and

transmitting data to the merchant indicating one of
authorization of the attempted transaction and denial of the
attempted transaction.

15 --21. The method as set forth in claim 20, wherein
receiving the automated clearing house transfer includes
receiving the automated clearing house transfer at a
predetermined time for a predetermined amount of money.

20 --22. The method as set forth in claim 21, wherein
the predetermined time is on a recurring basis.

--23. The method as set forth in claim 22, wherein

the recurring basis occurs one of daily, weekly, monthly
and yearly.

--24. The method as set forth in claim 20, wherein

5 the source account is one of a checking account, a savings
account and a money market account.

--25. The method as set forth in claim 20, wherein

10 the destination account is one of a checking account, a
savings account and a money market account.

--26. The method as set forth in claim 20, wherein

15 the source account and the destination account are managed
by the same financial institution.

--27. The method as set forth in claim 26, wherein

the financial institution is one of a bank and a credit
card company.

20 --28. The method as set forth in claim 20, wherein

receiving the transaction data from the merchant includes
receiving the data from the merchant via a proprietary
credit network, the proprietary credit network being associated

with one of VISA®, MasterCard®, Plus, Novus, Diner's Club® and American Express®.

--29. The method as set forth in claim 20, wherein

5 processing the attempted transaction with the credit card
interchange rate includes

accessing the balance of the destination account to
determine whether the balance is greater than or equal to the
transaction amount,

10 if it is determined that the balance is greater than or
equal to the transaction amount authorizing the attempted
transaction, and

if it is determined that the balance is not greater than or
equal to the transaction amount, denying the attempted

15 transaction.

--30. The method as set forth in claim 20, wherein

processing the attempted transaction with the credit card
interchange rate includes

20 accessing the balance of the destination account to
determine whether the balance is greater than or equal to the
transaction amount,

if it is determined that the balance is greater than or equal to the transaction amount authorizing the attempted transaction,

and if it is determined that the balance is not greater than or equal to the transaction amount, one of reprocessing the attempted transaction and accessing a line of credit associated with at least one of the source account and the destination account for funding the attempted transaction or at least a portion of the attempted transaction.

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--31. The method as set forth in claim 30, wherein an account holder associated with the source account and the destination account is presented with an option of reprocessing the attempted transaction or accessing the line of credit associated with the at least one of the source account and the destination account.

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--32. The method as set forth in claim 20, wherein the credit card interchange rate is a percentage of the transaction amount.

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--33. The method as set forth in claim 20, further comprising:

providing interest at one of a fixed interest rate and a variable interest rate on at least a portion of the balance of the destination account, the interest accruing after expiration of a predetermined period of time.

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--34. The method as set forth in claim 20, further comprising:

providing a reward to an account holder associated with the source account and the destination account, if the attempted

10 transaction was authorized.

--35. The method as set forth in claim 34, wherein providing the reward includes

assigning at least one reward unit to another account

15 associated with the destination account, the at least one reward unit being determined according to the transaction amount of the attempted transaction.

--36. The method as set forth in claim 35, wherein

20 the at least one reward unit includes one of at least one point and at least one mile.

--37. The method as set forth in claim 34, wherein

the reward includes one of a discount on the transaction amount of the attempted transaction, a gift certificate, a coupon, a good and a service.

5 --38. A method for processing a transaction, the method comprising:

receiving transaction data from a merchant indicating an attempted transaction, the transaction data including a transaction amount and data identifying the destination account;

10 processing the attempted transaction with a credit card interchange rate;

requesting an automated clearing house transfer for the transaction amount to be transmitted from a source account to a destination account via an automated clearing house network;

15 receiving the automated clearing house transfer; and

transmitting data to the merchant indicating one of authorization of the attempted transaction and denial of the attempted transaction.

20 --39. The method as set forth in claim 38, further comprising:

adjusting destination account data associated with the destination account by increasing a balance of the destination

account by an amount of the automated clearing house transfer
upon receiving the automated clearing house transfer; and

readjusting the destination account data by decreasing the
balance of the destination account one of before and after

5 transmitting the authorization data to the merchant.

--40. A system for processing a transaction comprising:

a memory unit for storing destination account data

including data indicating a balance of a destination account and

10 data identifying the destination account; and

a processing unit operatively connected to the memory unit,
the processing unit programmed to

automatically request an automated clearing house transfer
from a source account to the destination account via an

15 automated clearing house network,

receive the automated clearing house transfer,

adjust the destination account data associated with the
destination account by increasing the balance of the destination
account by an amount of the transfer,

20 receive transaction data from a merchant indicating an
attempted transaction, the transaction data including a
transaction amount and the data identifying the destination
account,

process the attempted transaction with a credit card
interchange rate, and

transmit data to the merchant indicating one of
authorization of the attempted transaction and denial of the
5 attempted transaction.

--41. A system for processing a transaction comprising:
a memory unit for storing destination account data
including data indicating a balance of a destination account and
10 data identifying the destination account; and

a processing unit operatively connected to the memory unit,
the processing unit programmed to

receive an automated clearing house transfer from a source
account via an automated clearing house network,
15 adjust the destination account data associated with the
destination account by increasing the balance of the destination
account by an amount of the transfer,

receiving transaction data from a merchant indicating an
attempted transaction, the transaction data including a
20 transaction amount and the data identifying the destination
account,

processing the attempted transaction with a credit card
interchange rate, and

transmitting data to the merchant indicating one of authorization of the attempted transaction and denial of the attempted transaction.

5 --42. A system for processing a transaction comprising:
a memory unit for storing destination account data including data indicating a balance of a destination account and data identifying the destination account; and
a processing unit operatively connected to the memory unit,
10 the processing unit programmed to
receive an automated clearing house transfer from a source account via an automated clearing house network,
adjust the destination account data associated with the destination account by increasing the balance of the destination
15 account by an amount of the transfer;
receive transaction data from a merchant indicating an attempted transaction, the transaction data including a transaction amount and the data identifying the destination account,
20 processing the attempted transaction with a credit card interchange rate, and

transmitting data to the merchant indicating one of
authorization of the attempted transaction and denial of the
attempted transaction.